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Human rights questions: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Benin, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malta, Monaco, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, South Africa, Togo, Ukraine, United States of America and Venezuela: draft resolution

Regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 32/127 of 16 December 1977 and all its subsequent resolutions concerning regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights,

Recalling also Commission on Human Rights resolution 1993/51 of 9 March 1993[1] and its subsequent resolutions,

Bearing in mind the relevant resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights concerning advisory services and technical cooperation in the field of human rights, including its most recent resolution on that subject, 1998/57 of 17 April 1998,[1]

Bearing in mind also the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993,[2] reiterating the need to consider the possibility of establishing regional and subregional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights where they do not already exist,

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1993, Supplement No. 3* (E/1993/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[2] A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

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Recalling that the World Conference on Human Rights recommended that more resources should be made available for the strengthening of regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights under the programme of technical cooperation in the field of human rights of the Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights,

Reaffirming that regional arrangements play a fundamental role in promoting and protecting human rights and should reinforce universal human rights standards, as contained in international human rights instruments, and their protection,

Noting the progress achieved so far in the promotion and protection of human rights at the regional level under the auspices of the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the regional intergovernmental organizations,

Noting further the expansion, since 1993, of the technical cooperation programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, extended upon the request of the concerned Member States, and the crucial importance of sharing information and experiences and developing and strengthening national capacities for the promotion and protection of human rights,

Also noting that national institutions can make an important contribution to the ongoing process of developing regional human rights arrangements, including in areas such as human rights education, mutual cooperation and information sharing,

1. *Takes note with satisfaction* of the report of the Secretary-General;[3]

2. *Welcomes* the continuing cooperation and assistance of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the further strengthening of the existing regional arrangements and regional machinery for the promotion and protection of human rights, in particular through technical cooperation which is aimed at national capacity-building, public information and education, with a view to exchanging information and experience in the field of human rights;

3. *Welcomes also*, in that respect, the close cooperation of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the organization of regional and subregional training courses and workshops in the field of human rights, high-level government expert meetings and regional conferences of national human rights institutions, aimed at creating greater understanding of the promotion and protection of human rights issues in the regions, improving procedures and examining the various systems for the promotion and protection of universally accepted human rights standards and at identifying obstacles to ratification of the principal international human rights treaties and strategies to overcome them;

4. *Stresses* the importance of the programme of technical cooperation in the field of human rights, renews its appeal to all Governments to consider making use of the possibilities offered by the United Nations, under this programme, of organizing information or training courses at the national level for government personnel on the application of international human rights standards and the experience of relevant international bodies, and notes with satisfaction, in that respect, the establishment of technical cooperation projects with Governments of all regions;

5. *Invites* all Governments to continue to support the activities of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the field of technical cooperation, with a view to further strengthening regional cooperation and regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights;

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[3] A/53/324.

6. *Reiterates* the recommendation of the World Conference on Human Rights that human rights officers be assigned if and when necessary to regional offices of the United Nations for the purpose of disseminating information and offering training and other technical assistance in the field of human rights upon the request of the concerned Member States and, in this regard, calls upon the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to also disseminate information regarding regional arrangements which exist in different parts of the world;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General, as foreseen in programme 19, Human rights, of the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001, to continue to strengthen exchanges between the United Nations and regional intergovernmental organizations dealing with human rights;

8. *Welcomes* the growing exchanges between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and regional intergovernmental organizations, as well as the growing exchanges between the bodies created by the United Nations in accordance with the treaties dealing with human rights and relevant regional organizations and bodies such as the Council of Europe and the African Commission on Human and People's Rights;

9. *Welcomes* the recent adoption by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the establishment of an African Court on Human and People's Rights;

10. *Invites* States in areas where regional arrangements in the field of human rights do not yet exist to consider concluding agreements with a view to the establishment within their respective regions of suitable regional machinery for the promotion and protection of human rights and recognizes in this context that, as stated during the sixth Workshop on Regional Arrangements for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Asian and Pacific Region, held in Teheran from 28 February to 2 March 1998,[4] is an important forum for the discussion of initiatives for regional cooperation;

11. *Requests* the Commission on Human Rights to continue to pay special attention to the most appropriate ways of assisting, at their request, countries of the different regions under the programme of technical cooperation and to make, where necessary, relevant recommendations;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session a report on the state of regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights and to include therein the results of action taken in pursuance of the present resolution;

13. *Decides* to consider this question further at its fifty-fifth session.

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[4] E/CN.4/1998/50